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STATE FOR EUR (DICARLO), EUR/SCE, L; NSC FOR BRAUN; OSD FOR
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SUBJECT: BOSNIA - IVANIC SHARES THOUGHTS ON DOMESTIC ISSUES

REF: SARAJEVO 1852

Classified By: DCM Judith Cefkin. Reason 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: At an August 16 meeting, Mladen Ivanic, Foreign Minister and leader of the Republika Serpska-based Party for Democratic Progress (PDP), shared with us his thoughts on the October elections, Brcko and police reform. Ivanic predicted that the elections would not result in major changes in Bosnia's political landscape. He underscored his support for the Brcko "close out" process, but complained that too many Brcko-related decisions are taken without consulting Bosnia's political leadership. Finally, he warned that police reform is headed for a political disaster, which could put off for months hopes for Bosnian-EU agreement on a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA.) END SUMMARY.

Elections: We Already Know the Results

12. (C) Ivanic expressed concern about the level of nationalist rhetoric in the election campaign to date. He attributed this to fallout from the failed attempt to amend Bosnia's constitution and to the recent release of two videos that allegedly show war crimes committed against Serbs during Operation Storm (reftel). Ivanic accused Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina (SBiH) leader Haris Silajdzic of provoking an ugly debate over constitutional reform by insisting that any reform must abolish the entities. This prompted Dodik's talk of a referendum in Republika Srpska (RS), he explained. Kosovo developments could make the situation worse and end up driving Bosnian politics for the next six weeks.

13. (C) Nonetheless, Ivanic said that the rough outlines of post-election Bosnian politics are already apparent. The parties that support constitutional reform are prepared to work together - only SBiH is "an unacceptable coalition partner," he added. He also predicted that the Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia-Herzegovina-1990 (HDZ-1990) could emerge as the largest of the Croat parties. Otherwise, the unknowns are whether the Party for Democratic Action (SDA) or Social Democratic Party (SDP) will be the largest Bosniak party and whether Milorad Dodik's Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) will win enough seats in the RS to rule without coalition partners.

Brcko: Consult, Then Act

14. (C) In the wake of several critical comments by Bosnian

politicians, including Ivanic, about the Brcko Supervisor's August 4 decision to issue an order abolishing the legal significance of the Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL), we expressed concern about Brcko becoming a political football during the election campaign. We also stressed that the order was fully consistent with the Final Award and an important milestone in the process of closing out the supervisory regime. Ivanic responded that he supported the order, but not how it was announced. There was no consultation with Bosnia's political leadership, he complained.

Police Reform: The Europeans Are Naive

15. (C) Turning to police reform, Ivanic warned that the OHR/EU strategy for advancing police reform (i.e., presenting a complete technical plan to the political parties after the elections on November 30 and expecting them to embrace it) was "dangerously naive." Dodik and RS President Cavic have dug themselves in on police reform, and their pre-election rhetoric against reform leaves them little room to maneuver post-election, Ivanic continued. Ivanic argued that political dialogue on police reform was needed now - not six to seven months from now. He said that he had tried to organize such talks several months ago, but his efforts had been misinterpreted and he was criticized for it.

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